

Issues and Answers #3 Testing Program

Because of the importance of the long-form data, the Census Bureau has implemented a testing program to compare the data from the ACS testing program with those from the Census 2000 long form. Reports (and their actual or expected release dates) from this testing program include:

Demonstrating Survey Quality (June 3, 2002). This report summarizes measures of survey quality for the C2SS, using the 1990 and 2000 census long forms and other surveys as benchmarks. The report includes a wide range of survey quality measures, including measures of coverage error, unit and item nonresponse, and sampling error.

Comparing General Demographic Characteristics with Census 2000 (August 2002). This report includes detailed comparisons of the Census 2000 complete count data with the C2SS at the national and state level. Items include age, sex, household relationship, Hispanic origin, race, tenure, and vacancy status. The analysis will also address how the different stages of survey weighting and editing affected the estimates. Explanations for the differences will be summarized.

Comparing Selected Social Characteristics with Census 2000 (November 2002). This report is the first of three reports designed to summarize the most important differences between the C2SS and the Census 2000 long-form estimates at the national and state levels. Items include school enrollment, educational attainment, marital status, fertility, grandparents as caregivers, veteran status, disability status, residence one year ago, place of birth, citizenship and year of entry, region of birth of foreign born, language spoken at home, and ancestry. The analysis will also address how the different stages of survey weighting and editing affected the estimates.

Comparing Selected Economic Characteristics with Census 2000 (January 2003). This report is the second of three reports to summarize the most important differences between the C2SS and the Census 2000 long-form estimates at the national and state levels. Items include: employment status, commuting to work, occupation, industry, income and benefits, and poverty. The analysis will also address how the different stages of survey weighting and editing affected the estimates.

Comparing Selected Housing Characteristics with Census 2000 (January 2003). This report is the last of three reports to summarize the most important differences between the C2SS and the Census 2000 long-form estimates at the national and state levels. Items include units in structure, year structure built, number of rooms, year householder moved into unit, vehicles available, house heating fuel, occupants per room, value, mortgage status and selected monthly owner costs, and gross rent as a percentage of household income. The analysis will also address how the different stages of survey weighting and editing affected the estimates.

Comparing Small Area Three-Year Averages with Census 2000 (May 2003). We will provide local experts who are familiar with the 31 ACS comparison sites with data from

the 1999-2001 ACS test sites, and comparable Census 2000 long form data, at the census tract level. These data will be in a form that makes it convenient to identify tracts with major differences and see what these tracts have in common.

Local experts who wish to study these data will be provided with suggested guidelines for conducting certain basic analyses in a common format, and asked to try to explain and interpret the differences they see and to provide comments on how we can improve the ACS as a replacement for the census long form. This report will provide a summary of their findings.

Continuing Evaluations. Since the ACS is a continuing program, staff at the Census Bureau, as well as other users of ACS data, will continue to evaluate and report on the quality of the ACS data as time goes on. Some of these studies may involve continued comparisons with Census 2000 data.